



RECORDS MANAGEMENT ADVICE

Basics of Records Management

Covid-19 Documents – Historic Records

Purpose: Provide guidance to agencies on what records to keep documenting COVID-19 for historic purposes.

Why are these Records Important?

Future historians, as well as future staff of your agency, will benefit from COVID-19 records being evaluated, managed and retained. These records may reveal how your agency communicated with the public and how staff was directed to continue daily services to the citizens of Maine while remaining safe and healthy. The lessons learned along the way may also assist agencies in planning for, or responding to, a future crisis.

Records Requiring Attention

While maintaining routine agency records according to state records retention schedules, keep in mind any unusual or out-of-the-ordinary records or methods of communication, either with staff or the public, which may be looked at as archival records. In addition to day-to-day business records, be cognizant of official press releases or policy decisions which have impacted the operations of the agency or citizens of Maine. Messages shared on social media/websites (not kept in another format), providing a clear picture of how Maine has responded to the pandemic may also have value.

What the Maine State Archives is Looking to Preserve

The State Archives is primarily looking at policy records. We know the CDC and the Governor's Office are issuing directives and press releases, but we also want to capture how the State and/or government agencies are reacting on a larger scale including: what changes have been made to continue operations and how services to the public changed. We want to be sure we capture the records from the pandemic at the agencies (other than those records we know will be captured by legislation).

Archival records documenting an agency's response to COVID-19 may include:

- Internal memos or correspondence documenting new work arrangements or remote work procedures in response to the Governor's "Stay Safer at Home" Order.
- Social media posts and website materials (not duplicated elsewhere) which are providing guidance on services, operations or other program information which may provide insight into how the State handled this pandemic. This may include multimedia documentation of agency responses such as, photos of notices posted in buildings, social distancing measures implemented in the office, and recorded webinars used for training purposes.
- Press releases, directives and other official sent from the office. This encompasses Maine Emergency Management Agency/Maine State Emergency Operations Center activities and communications.
- Special programs involving staff during the pandemic.

Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available at

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/statetraining.html>

"The right record, to the right person, at the right time, at the lowest possible cost"